

Lord Milner's dejection over the state of things he found in Russia must have been deep indeed for him to voice so gloomy a sentiment. The outbreak of the Russian Revolution, which followed so swiftly on the heels of the Allied Conference, destroyed the value of all the *Shadow of* work it had accomplished. The shadow *revolution* of this rapidly approaching political collapse overhung all the deliberations of the Conference. The minutes of the proceedings, and still more the memoranda and confidential reports prepared by the British delegates, convey to their reader the impression of a general state of chaos and disorganisation, of open corruption and incompetent leadership, which made most of the work which the Conference attempted to carry out as futile as cultivating a quicksand.

The murder of Rasputin had taken place on 31st December, 1916, a month before the Mission reached Petrograd, and instead of closing accounts *Rasputin's* between Court and people, it had only *murder* stirred up the latent discontents to freer expression. Throughout their stay in Russia, our delegates heard quite open discussion, even in the highest circles of Petrograd society, as to the probability of the Czar and Czarina being assassinated. Indeed, it transpired that in some quarters the highest hope entertained in regard to the Allied Conference was that it might produce some arrangement which would on one

pretext or
other remove Nicholas and his wife out
of Russia,
and leave affairs there to a Regent who
might be able
to pull things together.

Curiously enough, the British delegates
could not
bring themselves to take this talk quite
seriously.